



City of Pleasanton Human Services Needs Assessment

Strategic Plan 2014-2016

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Background

In 2011, Resource Development Associations (RDA), a local consulting firm specializing in strategic planning and evaluation for local government and nonprofit entities, facilitated a broad-based community-driven assessment of human service needs in Eastern Alameda County (commissioned jointly by the Tri-Valley cities of Dublin, Livermore, and Pleasanton). The 2011 Needs Assessment found a significant and increasing disparity between a growing need for human services and a generally stagnating supply of services available.

The City of Pleasanton's Human Services Commission (Commission) is a nine-member body (with seven regular members, one alternate member and one non-voting youth member) that oversees the grant application process for the provision of human services assistance and programs. The Commission makes funding recommendations to the Pleasanton City Council regarding 1) the human service needs of the community and 2) methods for meeting these needs. The Commission focuses on the human service needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged, the elderly, and youth in the community. Upon review of the 2011 Needs Assessment, the Commission determined that it needed to develop a community-specific Strategic Plan to ensure that it would carry out its duties in the most thoughtful and effective way. The Commission chose RDA to conduct this strategic planning process.

The Commission identified several key questions it wanted to address in the strategic planning process:

- ❖ How do we use funding in the most effective and efficient way?
- ❖ How do we continue to assess and prioritize needs in the community?
- ❖ How do we measure success?
- ❖ What is the timeline for the strategic plan?
- ❖ How do we account for changes in needs?
- ❖ How can we help our grantees build capacity through collaboration and innovation?
- ❖ How do we develop a relationship with our stakeholders (providers and community members)?
- ❖ How do we go beyond what we are currently providing given the increasing needs?
- ❖ How do we strategically allocate grant funding to catalyze change?

Planning Methods, Activities, and Timeline

Between June and December 2013, the Strategic Planning process included the following activities:

Date	Methods/Activities	Outcomes
June 19, 2013	First Strategic Planning Workshop	Defined strategic planning objectives Group activity to develop Mission, Vision, and Values statement
June 2013	Extraction of Pleasanton-specific data from Eastern Alameda County Human Services Needs Assessment; Focus groups with service providers	Pleasanton-specific needs assessment
July 16, 2013	Second Strategic Planning Workshop	Group activity to develop Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Identification of priority needs and systemic challenges
August 2013	Research on innovative practices/strategies to address priority needs and systemic challenges	Inventory of best practices for addressing priority needs and systemic challenges
September 11, 2013	Third Strategic Planning Workshop	Identification of strategic actions based on community needs and systemic challenges Commission members finalize strategic priorities and internal development goals through completion of email survey responses
October 2013	Draft Strategic Plan reviewed by City staff.	Feedback from City staff on draft Strategic Plan and revise Plan.
November 6, 2013	Fourth Strategic Planning Workshop	Feedback from Commission on the presentation/overview of the Strategic Plan
December 2013	Draft Strategic Plan circulated to Commission members.	Feedback from Commission on draft strategic plan, fill in remaining details, and finalize Plan

Mission, Vision, and Values

Formulating a mission, vision, and values statement clarifies the purpose of the Human Services Needs Assessment's Strategic Plan and produces internal and external legitimacy. Mission and values statements help all members of an organization identify, and remain focused on, what is truly important in the Strategic Plan. They serve as benchmarks by which organizational strategies and actions can be prioritized.

The Strategic Plan's mission, vision, and values statement was developed from a group activity in which members answered the following questions:

- ❖ *What problems does the Human Services Needs Assessment address?*
- ❖ *How do we respond to problems?*
- ❖ *Who are our stakeholders?*
- ❖ *What is our relationship with our stakeholders?*
- ❖ *What does success look like?*
- ❖ *What are our values?*
- ❖ *What makes us unique?*

Responses to these questions contributed to the formation of this mission, vision, and values statement:

Human Services Needs Assessment Strategic Plan

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission:

The mission of the Human Services Needs Assessment Strategic Plan is to support the provision of highest quality human services so that all residents can meet their basic life needs. To this end, the Commission will advise the City Council, identify and prioritize local needs; assist in the coordination of existing services to address gaps; encourage collaboration and innovation; and promote efficient and effective allocation of public resources.

Vision:

All Pleasanton residents should have access to basic health and human services locally and with dignity. Residents should be kept informed of current community resources, should be knowledgeable about the most effective ways to address service gaps, and should engage in efforts to increase the quality of life and self-sufficiency of vulnerable individuals and families.

Values:

Effect social change, build capacity, collaborate with partners, learn and innovate, use data to inform decision making, remain flexible as new issues and opportunities arise, measure outcomes.

Assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

In order to strategically plan for the future, the Pleasanton Human Services Commission participated in an assessment of the Commission’s internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are factors that the Human Services Commission can manage, build upon, and improve internally, while opportunities and threats cannot be controlled by the Commission. However, identifying and understanding opportunities and threats helps inform the Commission’s ability to leverage future opportunities and mitigate the impact of threats.

Internal		External	
+	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have money to distribute • Have connections with City staff and service providers • Smart, hardworking members • Practical and diverse experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hospital administration ○ Public service agency admin. ○ Senior program directorship ○ Community college workforce development ○ Parent of special needs youth ○ Special needs youth recreation admin. ○ Corporate/business mgmt. ○ Public policy ○ Ala. Co. Health and Human Services ○ Hospice provider • Community connections • Relationship with City Manager • Willing to try old and new things • Time/retirement • Personal experience as working poor 	+	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers are strong; they are “survivors” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ experience in collaboration ○ strong boards and leadership ○ business-oriented and pragmatic • Few agency gaps • Can collaborate with Dublin and Livermore to address issues of scale • Historically receptive City Council • Local politics is accessible • Doesn’t take many advocates to make change • Locally-based large corporations with resources • Wealthy residents with expendable income • Community is generous and has good will • Untapped resources, including faith-based community
-	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient money/time to do all we want to do • Only distribute money once per year • Lack of economic and ethnic diversity • Lack complete understanding of problems/ root causes • Lack of means to influence providers/ catalyze change • Lack of focus • Lack of knowledge about best practices • Question whether we have the courage to make change 	-	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in government is slow • Limited communication between school district and City/human services • Lack of succession planning for retiring experts • Donation fatigue; difficulty getting money from corporations • Competing services/duplication of services • Providers face competition for scarce resources • Changing political environment
Internal		External	

Pleasanton Needs Assessment

Data extracted from the Eastern Alameda County Human Services Needs Assessment (EACHSNA) and two focus groups with Pleasanton service providers informed the strategic planning process. The EACHSNA data derived from census information, surveys of hard to reach populations, provider surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews. Two Pleasanton focus groups with service providers were conducted as part of this planning process on July 8, 2013 and on July 9, 2013.

The data from these sources identified current issues affecting human services needs in Pleasanton, including:

- ❖ Significant population growth over the past two decades,
- ❖ Greater diversity in the population – higher numbers of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic/Latinos in the community,
- ❖ Increase in unemployment over the past decade,
- ❖ Increase in percentage of residents receiving social assistance, and
- ❖ Priority needs identified by focus group poll of service providers:
 - Affordable housing
 - Behavioral health services
 - Health care services
 - Workforce development
 - Senior services
 - Transportation services/accessibility of services.

A more complete Pleasanton-specific Human Services Needs Assessment is included in Appendix A.

Identification of Strategic Priorities

At the second strategic planning workshop, members of the Human Services Commission reviewed the Pleasanton-specific needs assessment, considered their organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and discussed and prioritized human service needs and systemic challenges.

Most Critical Systemic Challenges (listed in alphabetical order):

- ❖ Lack of consumer information about services/need for education
- ❖ Lack of coordination, missed opportunities for collaboration, and duplication of services among service providers
- ❖ Time and cost associated with obtaining services
- ❖ Untapped resources

Most Critical Human Service Needs (listed in alphabetical order):

- ❖ Disability services and access
- ❖ Food and nutrition
- ❖ Health care and behavioral health
- ❖ Senior services
- ❖ Workforce development/unemployment
- ❖ Youth services

Innovative, Promising, and Best Practices Research

Upon identification of strategic priorities, Commission members charged RDA with researching current practices in other jurisdictions that Pleasanton could adopt to address the most critical systemic challenges and priority human services described above. Findings from this research are included in Appendix B.

Identification of Strategic Actions

At the third strategic planning workshop, the Commission 1) reviewed research on innovative, promising and best practices and 2) selected strategies that would be most relevant, possible, and effective in Pleasanton. The Commission’s strategic priorities are described below (and listed in alphabetical order).

Strategic Action #1: Revise Human Services Commission Grant-making Protocols/RFPs to Address Identified Needs and Systemic Challenges.

As noted above, through this strategic planning process, the Commission identified the four (4) most critical systemic challenges and the six (6) most critical human service needs. At the outset of this process, the Commission stated its intention to “try to steer grant money to address the most important needs,” “figure out how we can make the providers’ job more efficient,” “recommend allocating money to catalyze change,” “foster building infrastructure and collaboration,” and to “see social change, not just business as usual.” To accomplish these goals in light of the prioritized challenges and needs, the Commission will revise any relevant grant-making protocols and request for proposals to reflect a strategic emphasis on the four (4) systemic challenges and six (6) human service needs.

Measures of Success:

- Revised grant application for FY2014/15 grants

Strategic Action #2: Spearhead a Community Engagement and Education Campaign

The data from focus groups and the 2011 Eastern Alameda County Needs Assessment identified gaps in local community members' knowledge about available services and how to access them. In a survey of hard to reach populations, 38% reported that they did not know where to get the help that they needed. This lack of knowledge about services that currently exist presents a critical obstacle to effective service provision. As service providers from the strategic planning focus groups noted:

- ❖ “People don’t know what services are available, and/or what services they qualify for.”
- ❖ “Getting the word out about existing services is a big challenge.”

This strategic priority, to coordinate a Community Engagement and Education Campaign, is intended to further the work of the Pleasanton Human Services Commission and its grantees by educating the community about needed services. This campaign provides valuable support to the outreach efforts of community-based organizations and other service providers. It serves long-term community building efforts by educating all community members about human services needs in Pleasanton.

This campaign incorporates strategies that were 1) identified either by local community service providers, Human Services Commission members, or by research into innovative and promising programs in other jurisdictions, and 2) chosen by Commission members as the most inspiring and relevant projects to meet Pleasanton’s community needs. The campaign includes the following elements:

- ❖ Conducting information sessions/health fairs about available services,
- ❖ Presenting service information to the public via a dynamic, interactive kiosk that can be accessed in well-trafficked, public locations,
- ❖ Developing a community-building public relations campaign highlighting the “different faces of Pleasanton” to raise community awareness of local needs and increase awareness of local diversity,
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive program to raise awareness about and understanding of, available public and non-profit services. As part of this program, explore ways to designate one or more city employees, as determined by the city manager, to be responsible for coordinating outreach and education efforts, and
- ❖ Inclusion of a gamification/public competition element (asking local residents to wrestle with the same issues that public agencies deal with and come up with potential solutions).

Measures of Success (planning)

- Written proposal and budget
- Potential funders identified
- Funding obtained from City Council and other sources
- Designate staff to coordinate outreach and education program

Measures of Success (implementation)

- # of activities
- # of participants involved in activities
- Participant satisfaction
- Indicators of community engagement and knowledge

Strategic Action #3: Sponsor Alliance among Nonprofit, Faith-Based, and Public Agency Providers

In focus groups, service providers described a lack of knowledge about existing supports, duplication of services, and insufficient communications, in spite of generally having positive relationships with one another. An alliance among human service organizations will help to reduce communication barriers and increase coordination of efforts to address persistent human service needs. Per discussions with providers, an alliance would include quarterly meetings.

Human Services Commission members expressed their desire to create a space for providers to share lessons learned, to develop new and innovative ideas, to coordinate the provision of services, and to troubleshoot human services challenges and needs on a regular basis.

The Commission also identified a need to include public agencies and faith-based organizations in the alliance. The Commission believes that by prioritizing collaboration and information sharing, this effort will ensure that local public agencies (such as schools, the health department, etc.) are connected with what is happening on the ground in the community, and that such knowledge will inform their provision of services. This alliance also connects service providers with faith-based organizations from which volunteers may be recruited.

Measures of Success (planning)

- Develop a comprehensive program to raise awareness about, and understanding of, available public and non-profit services
- As part of this program, explore ways to designate one or more City employees, as determined by the City Manager, to be responsible for coordinating outreach and education efforts

Measures of Success (implementation)

- # of meetings
- # of participants involved in each meeting
- # of jointly sponsored campaigns, activities, proposals, etc.
- Indicators of campaign, activity, proposal success
- Member satisfaction

Strategic Action #4: Workforce Development Project

The service provider focus groups and Human Services Commission members each identified workforce development (including job training and career development assistance) as one of the most critical needs in Pleasanton. The inability to find employment affects numerous human service needs, such as an individual's ability to maintain housing and food/nutritional needs. With this Strategic Priority, the Human Services Commission seeks to support job skills development for the unemployed and under-employed, increase opportunities for residents to participate in on-the-job training programs and paid internships, and develop new mentoring opportunities or support recruiting for existing mentoring programs.

With this strategic priority, the Human Services Commission will look to partner with other cities, agencies, and corporations to fund the programs. The Commission will also seek to partner with job skills programs that may exist in the community (such as the Tri-Valley One Stop Career Center), assist with recruiting new mentors and mentees for existing mentoring programs, and conduct outreach to employers (nonprofits, educational institutions, large and small business, and government agencies) for participation in a paid job/internship program.

Measures of Success (planning)

- Identify job skills/workforce development partners in the community
- Funding obtained from City Council and other partner cities, agencies, and corporations
- Designate staff to research and conduct outreach to partner organizations/programs

Measures of Success (implementation)

- # of partner relationships developed or enhanced
- # of mentors and mentees recruited for job mentoring programs
- # of individuals served in job skills/workforce development programs
- # of employers recruited for paid job/internship programs

Organizational Priorities

Organizational priorities are those that strengthen the organization internally and ensure that its members are productive, effective, informed, and competent to meet the organization's programmatic goals and mission.

Members of the Pleasanton Human Services Commission participated in an October 2013 survey in which they ranked their top organizational priorities from the following nine possibilities.

The highlighted priorities listed, received the highest number of votes (at least 3) from the Commission members:

- ❖ **Welcome and encourage people of diverse backgrounds to become more involved with the Human Services Commission**
- ❖ **Building relationships with regional (Livermore, Dublin) staff and government representatives**
- ❖ Increasing fundraising capacity
- ❖ Documenting and evaluating Human Services Commission successes
- ❖ Updating strategic planning on a regular basis
- ❖ Building relationships with Pleasanton staff and local government
- ❖ Updating Needs Assessment every 3 years
- ❖ Participating in state-wide advocacy efforts
- ❖ Self-educating about best practices

Organizational Actions

To achieve the organizational priorities, the Commission will take the following actions:

Organizational Action #1: Continue to Reach Out to Livermore and Dublin Human Services Commissions and City Staff.

The Pleasanton Human Services Commission seeks to provide a foundation for the development of regional efforts to leverage economies of scale and address human services needs applicable to residents throughout the Tri-Valley region. Greater coordination of regional efforts may also be a strategy to increase regional recognition for an area of Alameda County that is perceived as relatively prosperous and without any need for service expansion. In addition, developing these relationships will encourage further collaboration to address some of the systemic challenges identified in the strategic planning process (e.g., lack of knowledge about available resources, duplication of services).

Pleasanton Human Services Commission will continue to communicate and meet with the Livermore Human Services Commission and the Dublin Human Services Commission to learn more, on a real-time basis, about overlapping needs, priorities, and strategies. The Commission will also reach out to invite Livermore and Dublin Human Services Commission members to attend more Pleasanton Human Services Commission meetings.

Measures of Success

- # of meetings planned and facilitated
- Average # of attendees at meeting
- Meeting minutes taken and distributed
- Identification of regional campaign or project to address regional human service need

Organizational Action #2: Diversify Pleasanton Human Services Commission Membership

As the EACHSNA revealed, Pleasanton's population has grown significantly over the past 2 decades, and has become much more diverse. For example, 2,755 Asian/Pacific Islanders resided in Pleasanton in 1990; by 2010, almost six times as many (16,334) were Pleasanton residents. The Hispanic/Latino population in Pleasanton nearly doubled in the same time period. The percentage of residents who are unemployed or who are receiving social assistance, such as food stamps or Medi-Cal, has increased as well in recent years.

At the same time, the Commission's focus on the human service needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged, the disabled, the elderly, and youth in the community suggests that representation on the Commission of those populations served should also be targeted. Best practices suggest that organizations that better reflect the diversity of the community served are informed by a variety of perspectives and able to make better decisions and recommendations. (The Commission currently includes a non-voting member representing the youth population.)

To increase diversity, the Human Services Commission will welcome and encourage individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to get involved with the Commission. The Human Services Commission will develop and implement specific strategies (such as posting notices in the community locations where consumers of human services programs go and initiate marketing efforts encourage individuals to get involved and apply for vacant positions on the Commission.

Measures of Success

- # of recruitment activities
- Type of recruitment activities
- Increased # of applications that are received from applicants with underserved/underrepresented backgrounds